



FIRE MOBILIZATION NEWS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

State Emergency Operations Center
Camp Murray, Washington



For immediate release

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Update: Elk Heights Fire in Kittitas County

CAMP MURRAY – Firefighters who have been dispatched from various counties around the state continue to make progress with the Elk Heights Fire. The fire is burning approximately 10 miles west of Ellensburg in Kittitas County.

A total of 300 firefighters, 90 engines/tenders, 9 10-person hand crews, helicopters, fixed winged aircraft and 2 dozers are involved in fighting the fire. These firefighters and apparatus will complement the firefighters and engines/tenders from the local jurisdictions.

Firefighters continued to aggressively attacked the fire overnight and have it approximately 40% contained. The fire has burned approximately 600 acres and is threatening 197 residences and structures. Two residences and one outbuilding have been destroyed. Firefighters expect temperatures to be in the 80's today along with windy conditions. The Red Cross shelter at the Thorp High School remains open. Investigators have determined the cause of the fire to be arson related.

The Washington State Fire Mobilization Act was declared on July 30, 2004, at 5:15 p.m. by Chief Lowell Porter, and implemented by the Fire Protection Bureau of the Washington State Patrol at the request of the local fire service. Support from the state's Emergency Management Division at the State Emergency Operations Center at Camp Murray.

Creating a defensible space around your home is a must for residents living in a potential wild land fire area. The following are the 10 steps to defensible space:

- Thin tree and brush cover.
- Dispose of slash and debris left from thinning.
- Remove dead limbs, leaves and other litter.
- Stack firewood away from home.
- Maintain irrigated green belt around the home.
- Mow dry grasses and weeds.
- Prune branches to 10 feet above the ground.
- Trim branches.
- Clean roof and gutters.
- Reduce density of surrounding forest.

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